

The Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.
The Board of National Missions

THE NORTH ARCTIC SLOPE WORK OF ALASKA

Headquarters: Barrow, Alaska

Outwork Stations: Kaktovik (Barter Island)
Anaktuvuk Pass
Meade River Village (Coal mine and fishing site.)
All DEW-line Sites (number and geographical position
top secret)
Also wherever the Eskimos travel in the area
Plus whatever assistance is requested by the Rev. Roy
Ahmaogak who is pastor at Wainwright.

These Stations reached by flying in the Arctic Messenger III, a Cessna 170B

(Please, use bottom of page 2 to jot down any questions you might wish us to answer at the meeting with the Mission staff Wednesday evening.)

With the appointment of Mr. Wartes to the north Arctic field, it was felt that the straight title of 'Missionary' should be exchanged for one which better expressed the transition phase of the leadership. Consequently, in 1951 the combination of 'missionary-pastor-pilot' was started, but it is hoped that before too many years, the leadership will be largely in the hands of the native people, and that any missionary will have only assistant or advisory capacity over the whole area but no pastorate. How many years of this development remains is difficult to estimate, but it is clear that this is the next goal in leadership planning. One of the necessary preliminary steps is fully and adequately trained Eskimo leadership for all phases of the work, which means we would have to be able to actually see two or three young men going now into the pre-theological phase of training for the ministry--at the moment we have only one such young man who is now a senior in High School.

We do have one Lay Preacher: Samuel Simmonds. He was commissioned by Yukon Presbytery in 1955 for a period of one year. In 1956 he was up again for examination and recommissioned for a period of three years or until the annual meeting of Yukon Presbytery in 1959. Samuel is a capable and consecrated Eskimo leader having the confidence of his people. He has written the only Inupiat hymn about which we know, having written both the words and the music. He has also done a lot of translating of the traditional hymns for use in the native tongue. With his help, the Rev. Roy Ahmaogak is even now preparing anew edition of the Inupiat Hymnal. Samuel was taking special training at our San Francisco Seminary in 1953-54 but his studies were cut short when he contracted pneumonia and was sent to a Sanatorium as a TB suspect. He returned home late fall of 1954 after eight months in the hospital and has been on part-time with the mission ever since. His health would permit a full time schedule, but his wife is in a TB San. and he must have time to care for his family during her absence.

The church and it's branches are all organized with local officers and Church School teachers, with at least one Elder at each station as well as one or two Deacons. These officers carry on admirably with the materials which come to them directly from the publishers, plus the visits I am able to make bringing special services and ministries. However, because of the heavy load of work at Barrow, we are never able to get to the out-work as much as needed; not even being able to meet special requests for marriages and funerals which often arise at inopportune times. This is a serious problem and one we have tried to overcome by using the assistance of a student-Intern. Bill Zeiger came to us for the Summer of 1955, but seeing the need and being challenged by it, asked to be permitted to remain through the year and a second summer. He has one year remaining in his theological training and plans to return to San Francisco Theological Seminary this fall to complete his work prior to ordination in 1957. We have hopes that someone else will be available to replace Bill this fall, but no one is now in sight--nor are the necessary funds! With the increased population here, and the additional burden of the DEW-line, it is exceedingly difficult to meet even the most basic and minimum needs. This is particularly true when the whole culture here is going through terrific and rapid change and adjustment. There is little question but that the out-work is more than a full time job in itself and that the pastorate at Barrow proper has need of an ordained pastor who has no other responsibility. When one considers that we have over five hundred members, it can quickly be seen that in mission field work where very few members are capable of assuming unguided or unsupervised responsibilities, there is much left to be desired. At present, the pastor is obliged direct three choirs as well as give constant and major attention to every phase of the program. This is spreading oneself overly thin even though one enjoys every part of the work.

We have been able to improve the effectiveness of the Christian education program and interest more people in teaching than ever before. We have held a "Mission to Teachers" each year for four years, but we continue to face a lack of initiative in this field of Christian leadership even among the best of our people (this seems a paradox for the Eskimo people are positively masters of initiative and cleverness in the every day problems of living in this far north land.) There are many very faithful workers who try and in most circumstances do very well in everything we can rightfully expect them to do, but, regardless of their willingness and the progress thus far made, there is much to be desired in the effectiveness of the Christian Education program here and in every other phase of the work. There still are too many people to whom English is more of a problem than an asset. This problem does not only mean that a great deal more time is involved in trying to get a lesson or sermon across to people's minds and hearts, but there is the added burden of wondering whether many points are ever gotten through to them at all. In Barrow there is a tendency to a set of mind against English with a special ability to close out what one does not want to hear or understand. This is a problem which Christ spoke of and is, to a degree, too true of all to whom the gospel is addressed in every age and country. The obvious need for the field is greater Christian growth and dedication, and a depth of understanding of the message of the church. This is not news, but too often the unadmitted truth about many a local church as well as individual Christians.

In the following groups we are trying to attain some of the immediate goals and needs. They are in various stages of organization and development.

PRESBYKIDS 9 to 11 year olds (Director: Bonnie Wartes)
Fellowship - recreation - choir school
(one to three meetings a week)

POLAR / BEARERS 12 to 14 year olds (Director: William Wartes)
Jr. High Westminster Fellowship
(Sunday Choir practice and midweek recreation)

WESTMINSTER FELLOWSHIP 14 to 20 year olds (single)(Dir. Wm. Zeiger)
Weekly devotional and recreation
plus monthly party

GENEVA FELLOWSHIP Young adults, single, 21-40, or married and under 41.
 (Self-governing, but indirectly
 directed by Samuel Simmonds)
 (Meets every other week for recreation, fellowship, devotional)

THE FORTY-NINERS--Seeking the real Gold of Life
Adults (not old, not young) Young in Heart
(In process of being organized)

Two Sessions of Sunday School meet each Sunday afternoon with classes for every age.

3 Nursery class	2 Junior High Classes
3 Beginner classes	3 Young People's Classes
6 Primary classes	5 Adult Classes
5 Junior classes	

PAST HISTORY

When a meeting of church leaders resulted in the comity agreement · dividing the Alaska work, Dr. Sheldon Jackson saw that the north Arctic slope was being ignored by other churches and immediately said that the Presbyterian church would take it if no one else would. Mr. L. M. Stevenson was the first missionary. He was not ordained but was a teacher in the school from 1890 to 1897. He laid the foundation for the work though and in 1897 the Rev. H. R. Marsh arrived and in 1898 the church was organized. He was here until 1904. The Rev. S. R. Spriggs was Government school teacher and Sunday School worker from 1899 to 1904 when he became the minister, remaining until 1908. He was followed by the Rev. H. R. Marsh from 1908 to 1912, the Rev. D. M. Cram from 1912 to 1914 (the Rev. Cram was here many years longer than that as school teacher), Mr. T. L. Richardson for a year until Dr. Frank H. Spence, medical missionary arrived in 1915. The second medical-missionary was Dr. Henry W. Greist who served from 1921 until 1925 and again from 1929 to 1936 when the hospital work was turned over to the Department of Interior. Dr. A. W. Newhall, unordained medical-missionary, served during the period from 1925 to 1929. The Rev. Fred G. Klerekoper, 1936 to 1945, and the Rev. Samuel Lee, 1946 to 1951, were the two missionaries between Dr. Greist and the present missionary-pastor.

We have old people living yet today who remember the first missionary to Barrow. Many events in the lives of the people are dated by "when such or such a missionary was here."

(1210 75) 9561



BARROW TO:

1. BARTER ISLAND	340 MI.
2. AKLAVIK	600 MI.
3. ANAKTUVIK PASS	300 MI.
4. MEADE RIVER	83 MI.
5. WAINWRIGHT	92 MI.

0 50 100

SCALE OF MILES

TERRITORY
OF
ALASKA